



## COMMISSION ON AGING

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### COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING

Minutes  
September 25, 2017

**PRESIDING:** Sharonlee Vogel, Chair

#### **Members Attending**

Jennifer Asher  
Angie Boyter  
Peter Brunner  
Barbara Catlin  
Bob McLaughlin  
Eletta Morse  
Sue Song  
Michael Willis

#### **Excused**

Reginald Avery  
Susan Hailman  
Jan Horan  
Andrew Monjan

#### **Absent**

Debbie Fleischmann  
Julia Mattis

#### **Office on Aging and Independence**

Peggy Hoffman  
Terri Hansen

#### **Guests**

Clive Graham, Howard County Office of Transportation

#### **Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

#### **Approve Agenda**

Sharonlee Vogel requested that discussion of the Legislative Breakfast be moved to after the Office on Aging Report. Bob McLaughlin motioned to approve the amended agenda and Pete Brunner seconded the motion. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Agenda accepted.*

#### **Approve Minutes**

Angie Boyter motioned to approve the minutes, and Bob McLaughlin seconded the motion. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Minutes accepted.*

#### **Transportation Development Plan Update**

Clive Graham provided an update to the Commission on the Transportation Development Plan. The proposed, fixed-route plan proposes shorter, straighter routes as well as reduced travel time, increased frequency and increased weekend service.

A phased in approach would also address expansion of service to areas like Elkridge and Clarksville. The first phase, scheduled to take place from 2018-2019, would include reconfiguring fixed routes, reducing headway to one half hour on four routes and increased weekend service. This phase would require three additional buses and an additional 1.3 million in operating costs. Phase two would further expand fixed routes and increase weekend services as well as reduce wait time. Phase two is estimated to require an additional 12 buses and 2.3 million in operating costs.

While the paratransit system currently works well, it is cost prohibitive; currently a fixed route trip costs \$6.85 one way and paratransit is \$56. In order to address concerns with the paratransit system, the Office of Transportation intends to begin a dialogue with partners and to focus on services on those who are most in need. While no firm plan has been made for paratransit, the following ideas are being considered:

- Incentivize a switch from paratransit to fixed route, potentially by providing free fixed route travel to seniors
- Increase the paratransit fee from \$2.50 to \$4 (ADA) or \$5 (general paratransit)
- Raise the senior age from 60 to 65
- Reduce/limit number of trips provided to each client per month
- Limit origins/destinations
- Change hours from 9-4 instead of 8-5
- Use vouchers instead of providing RTA trips
- Reduce or eliminate subsidies to human service providers
- Improve service productivity (passengers per hour)

Following the presentation, the Commission again pointed out that transportation could be handled more efficiently via partnerships to provide on-demand, point-to-point transportation. The Commission inquired if a more centralized location for vehicles would provide any savings, but the potential savings were not significant.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Nominating Committee**

Sue Song reported that the nominating committee met and had three recommendations. First, the committee nominated Sharonlee Vogel as chair for the upcoming year. The committee also suggested that the position of vice chair be appointed by the chair, and that the term for the chair should be at least two years. Due to county code, not all of these recommendations could be acted on. Code states that Boards and Commissions must elect their officers annually. Sharonlee Vogel accepted the nomination for chair and all were in favor. The election of a vice chair has been tabled until October.

### **50+EXPO**

Jennifer Asher reported that the Commission's booth will continue to utilize the suggestion board to determine attendee's primary areas of concern. In addition, the COA would like to add a map for people to indicate the area of the county they reside in. The booth will feature both pens and magnets as giveaways, as well as copies of the tax credit paperwork and flyers to refer people to the Speak(easy) table from the Horizon Foundation.

### **Howard County Police Department**

Andre Lingham shared information about the Elder Empowerment Summit at the Bain 50+ Center. He also shared some additional information about the Equifax data breach and recommended individuals place a credit freeze on their personal accounts.

### **Caregiving**

The committee did not meet, but continues to work to identify caregivers in the community.

### **Budget**

No report.

## **Health and Wellness**

No report.

## **Aging in the Community**

Eletta Morse raised the issue of MAP's availability. She has heard from community members that it would be helpful for MAP to operate 24/7 and to have a computerized system that would record caller information so that it was available during future calls.

Peggy Hoffman shared that MAP was not created to be a 24/7 service; while it is not ideal, outside of normal business hours callers can leave a message or contact a crisis line, like Grassroots. MAP does utilize a computerized record keeping system that stores notes from each call. Peggy will prepare some statistics on the number of calls that come in outside normal business hours.

## **Chair's Report**

No report.

## **Office on Aging Report**

Terri Hansen shared that the Dental Screening Fair was a success; more 100 people participated and 94 received screenings. Several participants were turned away after failing the blood pressure screening and two were turned away due to income requirements. Many participants were referred to the October 7<sup>th</sup> event for treatment and most received vouchers to receive a cleaning from HCC's dental program.

Terri also shared information about the COGs annual Fall Fest. This year's event, entitled Sip, Savor, and Help a Senior, is a wine tasting.

## **Legislative Breakfast**

The Commission discussed and voted on topics for the upcoming Legislative Breakfast. The Breakfast will focus on the following issues:

- Introduction of a "Death with Dignity bill" that will win legislative support.
- Suggestion to fund a pilot public/private partnership program between the State and County and Lyft/Uber, and other commercial groups for on-demand service to provide the service at a discounted rate for on-demand transportation services.
- Explore establishing a state taskforce/commission on incorporating universal design (UD) requirements into all new- built housing, giving tax credits to those who retrofit UD even the most basic elements in their homes.
- Consider expansion of the Maryland income tax pension exclusion to make income distributions to retirees from IRAs eligible for the deduction. This change would make the pension exclusion more equitable. We understand a bill may be introduced for the upcoming 2017 Legislative Session.

Additionally, the Commission will share that they support legislative to reduce the threshold for the Aging in Place tax credit from 40 years to 25 years.

## **New Business**

None.

### **Adjournment**

Michael Willis motioned to adjourn. Pete Brunner seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:35pm.

Recording Secretary: Jennie Rittenhouse

Next Meeting: October 23, 2017, Ellicott City 50+ Center, 7pm